**What is a library database?**

* **Library databases contain information from published works.**
  + Examples: Magazine and newspaper articles, encyclopedias and other reference books.
* **Library databases are searchable.**
  + By Keywords, Subject, Author, Magazine Title, Date, etc.
* **Library databases provide citation information.**
  + Author, if available
  + Title of Article
  + Publication (Title of Magazine, Newspaper, or Reference Book)
  + Publisher
  + Date of Publication
* **Library databases often contain full-text articles.**
  + You can print or email an entire article.
* **There are different kinds of library databases**
  + For specific topics. Examples: History Reference Center, Opposing Viewpoints
  + For general topics Examples: ProQuest, EbscoHost, Gale, etc.

**How is a library database different from a website?**

| **Library databases** | **Web sites** |
| --- | --- |
| Library databases get their information from professionals or experts in the field. | Web sites can be written by anyone regardless of expertise. |
| Library databases contain published works where facts are checked. | Web site content is not necessarily checked by an expert. |
| Library databases are easy to cite in a bibliography and may create the citation for you. | Web sites often don’t provide the information necessary to create a complete citation. |
| Library databases can help you narrow your topic or suggest related subjects. | Web sites often aren’t organized to support student research needs. |
| Library databases are updated frequently and include the date of publication. | Web sites may not indicate when a page is updated. |

**Questions to ask about ANY information:**

* **Currency**: How recent is the information, and when was it last updated?
* **Organization**: Is it easy to find the information you need?
* **Accuracy**: How reliable is the information, and are the facts accurate?
* **Bibliography**: How easy is the work to cite in a bibliography? Does it give you the author, title, publisher, and date?
* **Unfamiliar Topics**: How useful is it when you don’t know where to start?

Any source, whether a library database or website, can have good information. It is necessary to think critically about all information that you read or view.